

**Abstract**

An Active User Registry system comprises a database which is integrated with the POTS network and a packet network (such as the Internet, or a corporate intranet).

5 Integrating AUR with the POTS network and a packet network exploits the outstanding strengths of both of its constituents, such as the low-latency, high reliability, moderate fidelity real-time voice telephony provided by the POTS network, and the point-and-click  
10 access to distributed databases with excellent search capabilities provided by a packet network, such as the Internet (including those made available using browser technology in conjunction with the World Wide Web). The AUR database contains a dynamic data structure (such as  
15 a linked list or a hashed table) of all the ways in which one or more users can be reached via some type of communication network (e.g., through the POTS network or a packet network, or both). A key feature of the AUR is the ability to broker between a subscriber's request for  
20 communications contact information corresponding to a user and the user's preferences of being reached by various communications alternatives. Other features may be included with the AUR, including an AUR cache which provides subscribers with rapid-access entry points into  
25 the AUR, or automatic updating of user contact information. Further, the capability of learning the user's preferences is included as an additional feature and is also included as a feature in an alternative embodiment of the present invention.

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